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## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

TC 3700 MAIL ROOM

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Group Art Unit 3753

In re the Application of:

**Tadahiro OHMI, et al.**Serial No.: **09/023,416**Filed: **February 13, 1998**Examiner: **J. Fox**For: **FLUID CONTROL APPARATUS****REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION**Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

February 1, 2002

Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated October 1, 2001, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections of claims 1 and 2 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over **Itafuji** in view of **Markulec, et al.** taking into account the following comments by Applicant.

The claimed invention is intended to improve upon known flow control organizations of the prior art by the development of various arrangements of 2-type, 2-3-type, 3-3-type and 3-3-3-type on-off valves in which the ports of such valves can be arranged in a row. The main bodies of the valves of the various valve types have identical structural configurations with the inlet and outlet ports of the respective valves, and the ports being arranged in a row along the respective lines of the concerned fluid control system. Thus, control systems of any desired configuration can be developed without the use of tubing and piping fixtures in order to produce a more compact system for each fluid control apparatus.

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More specifically, the present invention is particularly characterized in that the various flow control organizations, which may incorporate one, or any number of the piping arrangements illustrated in Fig. 2 can be effectively transformed into a corresponding number of piping arrangements as shown in Fig. 9 employing flow control apparatus of the concerned five types.

It is respectfully submitted that neither of the **Itafuji** or **Markulec, et al.** patents either teach or suggest this concept, regardless of whether the references are considered alone or in combination. Claims 1 and 2 are therefore submitted as being patentable over these references and should be allowed.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Enclosures: Petition for Extension of Time